

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

K. ROBERT LEWIS DIRECTOR

WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR PRESENTATION TO THE
VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REGARDING CERTAIN RAISED BILLS

MARCH 6, 2018

Good afternoon Senator Flexer, Senator Martin, Representative Hennessey, Senator Gomes , members of the Committee, fellow veterans, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is K. Robert Lewis, a Vietnam era veteran and current legislative director for The American Legion Department of Connecticut. I thank you for the opportunity to address certain Raised Bills that the Committee has before is today.

As the nation's largest wartime veterans organization, The American Legion advocates for the Care, Consideration Benefits and Recognition that America's veterans have earned from a grateful nation. It is that capacity that I address the Committee today as the State of Connecticut grapples with funding shortfalls across many constituencies in FY 18 and FY 19. The American Legion joins with our fellow Veteran Service Organizations in one voice to say that underfunding veterans benefits to include eliminating the Critical Care certification at the Rocky Hill Veterans Home and Hospital is unconscionable .

THE AMERICAN LEGION SUPPORTS RAISED BILL S 289 that allocates and directs two million dollars to the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs.

Further , strengthening the relationship between the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs and volunteer Municipal Representatives and codifying the operations within the Office of Advocacy and Assistance is timely and appropriate. **THE AMERICAN LEGION SUPPORTS RAISED BILL NO. 5317 – An Act Concerning Municipal Veterans Representatives**

The American Legion supports needed outreach to Female Veterans of all wars and conflicts as well as the realization of the American Dream for each and every veteran and their families. Therefore we agree with the policy statements set forth in **Raised Bill No. 287 – An Act Expanding Eligibility For Certain Veterans Benefits.**

The American Legion supports S.B No. 284 (Raised) – AN ACT CONCERNING BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS WHO HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH POSTY TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER OR TRAUMATIC BRIAN INJURY OR WHO HAVE HAD AN EXPERIENCE OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

This is a timely piece of legislation and continues the efforts across all agencies and administrations to make whole those who suffer from the afflictions identified. The American legion looks forward to passage of SB 284.

The American Legion supports efforts to combat homelessness and hopelessness among America's veterans and sees the positive influence that transportation plays in the transition from such circumstances. Therefore, we support Raised Bill **HB No. 5318 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE OFFERRING OF CERTAIN MOTOR VEHICLES FROM THE STATE MOTOR POOL TO VETERANS CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS.**

The American Legion takes no position on HB 5319

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on pending legislation that impacts the lives of Connecticut veterans.

K. Robert Lewis